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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ATHENS 001030

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NATO](#) [MK](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: GREECE/MACEDONIA: FURTHER PERSPECTIVES ON
RESOLVING THE NAME ISSUE

REF: A. SKOPJE 461
[1](#)B. ATHENS 1027

Classified By: Ambassador Daniel V. Speckhard for 1.4 (b) and (d)

SUMMARY/INTRODUCTION

[1](#)1. (C) Embassy Skopje has provided useful ideas on steps the U.S. might take to advance the name negotiations. In that spirit we want to offer Embassy Athens' thoughts on where the Greeks currently are on this issue, and what it might take for them to conclude a deal. We believe the Greeks are sincere in wanting a solution but are unlikely to move to a compromise unless they are sure the GOM will agree to, at a minimum:

-- A new composite name that makes clear the country in question comprises part of a broader, historic Macedonia;

-- Agreement that the new name will be used for all/all international usages.

[1](#)2. (C) If Athens perceives that the GOM has truly accepted the notion that they will have a composite name that will be used without exception outside their borders, we can anticipate coming to closure on this issue. If not, it is our assessment that regardless of what we do, and at what levels, prospects for progress are slim. The current assessment of the Greek government is that the GOM is still looking for ways to avoid this outcome and have the possibility to use "Republic of Macedonia" in some international usage. Moreover, they believe that over time the Macedonians would work to undermine an agreement by further broadening the usage of "Republic of Macedonia" in international affairs. Hence the Greeks' "one name, all usage" approach to the issue.

[1](#)3. (C) That said, we strongly support:

-- The suggestion to encourage a focus on the core issues - which we believe to be the name to be used and its scope of application;

-- The suggestion to press the UN mediator and the parties to address peripheral issues only after the core issues are addressed - although we anticipate that the Greeks will want to see how the peripheral issues are addressed before they agree to any final package; and

-- The proposal to press the parties to engage in direct talks. End Summary/Introduction.

Where the Greeks Are

[1](#)4. (C) Following the disappointing decision by Greece not to join consensus on a NATO invitation to Macedonia at the Bucharest Summit, the Greeks feel like they took their hits; however, they also point to the support they received from some -- particularly France. At this point, senior Greek officials appear to believe they have paid whatever price they are going to pay, and we can identify few levers that we can usefully employ or persuade others to employ that are significant enough to move them. While we understand it is not particularly welcome news, we believe that the Greeks are not likely to show any further flexibility in their position until they feel the GOM is willing to accept at least the following:

-- A new composite name that makes clear the country in question comprises part of a broader, historic Macedonia (such as "Republic of Northern Macedonia," "Republic of New Macedonia," "Republic of Upper Macedonia," etc.; and

-- Agreement that the new name will be used for all international usages, including for bilateral use. PM Karamanlis and FM Bakoyannis have been clear bothand in private that the solution must be "clean," and that they will not accept any arrangement by which Macedonia could seek to use a name other than the new international name in any international context. It is worth noting that, for the Greeks, this would represent a concession from their public position that any name be truly "erga omnes") involving a

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change in theRepublic of Macedonia's constitution.

15. (C If the Greeks believe that the Macedonians are willing to enter into such a commitment and are sincere in their promise to comply, then we can anticipate coming to closure reasonably quickly. However, in the absence of these conditions, we think it unlikely that progress will be possible in the negotiations regardless of what the United States or other Allies do, and irrespective of the level at which it is done. To date, the Greeks do not believe the Macedonians are willing to make and comply with such commitments.

16. (C) We fully understand that these conditions may be a bridge too far for Skopje, but we believe it is useful to have an honest assessment of what it would take to get Athens to move in the coming months.

Areas of Focus

17. (C) With that background in mind, we strongly support the following Embassy Skopje recommendations (ref A):

-- Focus on the core issues: We agree that this should be the UN mediator's focus - pressing the sides to find a mutually acceptable formulation for the name and to determine its scope of use;

-- Address peripheral issues only after the core issues are addressed: We agree with this approach, but caution that for the Greeks (and likely for the Macedonians) the devil is in the details, and nothing is likely to be agreed until everything is agreed. The Greeks are going to want to know what any implementing UNSCR looks like, and we suspect they will want assurances in this regard before they will agree to any final package; and

-- Direct Talks: We agree that direct talks are preferable to the current situation, although we may not want to insist that they be at the PM to PM level. FM Bakoyannis may be a better Greek interlocutor than the Prime Minister. One of our long-term talking points to the Greeks has been to talk directly to the Macedonians. However, given the levels of suspicions and mistrust (which have further suffered through the recent ref B PM to PM exchange of letters), this may be a tall order.

SPECKHARD